

Netflix goes live in France as part of Europe expansion

15 September 2014



A television screen pictured in Paris displaying the French user interface of US online streaming giant Netflix on September 15, 2014

Netflix has shaken up the industry in the United States by allowing subscribers to watch as much as they like, at any time, on almost any Internet-connected device such as a laptop, tablet or smartphone.

While savvy users can also connect their devices to a TV, Netflix announced a deal Monday with Bouygues Telecom which will integrate the service into the operator's next cable television box.

Netflix's entry into the French market is the beginning of its second wave of expansion across Europe. It is to be quickly followed by launches in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland.

Netflix launched its service in France on Monday, with the US online streaming giant also announcing a deal with a French cable operator as it began the second phase of its European expansion.

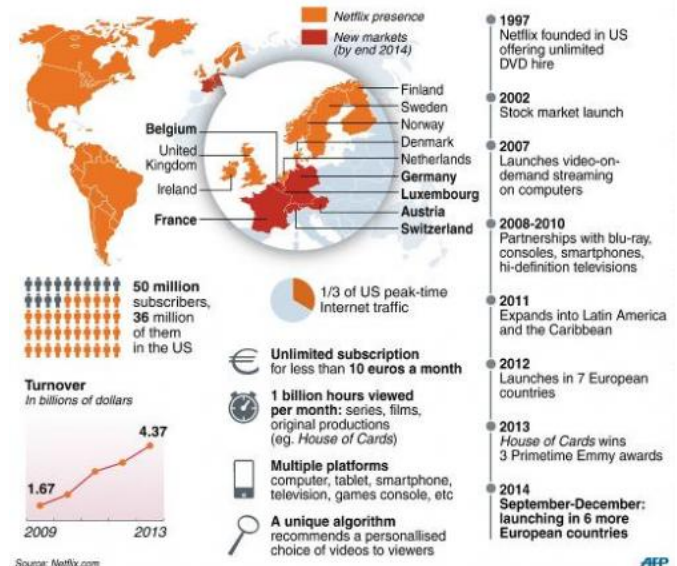
For 7.99 euros (\$10.34) per month [subscribers](#) in France can now enjoy access to Hollywood films, cartoons and television series including original content such "Orange is the New Black", a comedy-drama set in a prison, and the hugely successful political drama "House of Cards" starring Kevin Spacey and Robin Wright.

"We hope like in the rest of the world to be very popular by offering very low prices," Netflix chief Reed Hastings told AFP.

Hastings said within the next five-to-ten years Netflix hoped to have a third of France's 28 million households subscribing to the service, the same level now reached in the United States, and wants to top two million subscribers within five years.

Netflix expands in Europe

The leader in video-on-demand (TV via the Internet) operates in more than 40 countries



Factfile on US video-on-demand giant Netflix as it expands in Europe

The California-based company, which already has

50 million subscribers worldwide, three-quarters of which (36 million) are in the United States, has been available in Britain, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden since 2012.

revenge set in the port city of Marseille, France's second city.

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Business drama

The entry of the purveyor of popular US shows may turn into a business drama as a patchwork of European providers are bracing for an unequal battle with the company.

Many have improved their offers or dropped their prices ahead of Netflix's arrival.

In Germany, the Snap service of pay-TV channel Sky Deutschland recently dropped its price from 9.90 to 3.99 euros per month, far below the anticipated Netflix offer.

In France, meanwhile, the main pay-TV group Canal+ strengthened and modernised its online streaming offer, CanalPlay, which has attracted 520,000 subscribers in the past three years.

Netflix has had to negotiate an assortment of local rules and regulations to achieve this second wave of European expansion.

It faced particular obstacles in France where the film and television industry is strictly regulated.

TV channels and media companies in the country are required to invest in domestic content and there have been fears that Netflix would take away subscribers from Canal+, the main source of finance for French-made films.

Netflix will contribute 2.0 percent of its sales in France to the National Cinema Centre, which finances French filmmaking, but escapes restrictions on the amount of French and European content it must show.

Nevertheless, the company aims to produce its own French-language programming to woo French viewers.

Netflix is commissioning a French-language political drama—a tale of power, corruption and

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